

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SNM-05 DEAE-00 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AGRE-00 MCT-02
ACDA-12 LAB-04 SIL-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00 BIB-01
COME-00 EUR-12 /114 W
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P R 182216Z AUG 78
FM AMEXBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9613
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USSOUTHCOM
AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA POUCH
AMCONSUL CALI POUCH
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, COP
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SUMMARIES: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. "LAW AND ORDER" EMERGED AS A MAINTHEME AS THE
TURBAY ADMINISTRATION BEGAN TO OUTLINE ITS PRIORITIES AND
CONTINUED TO ORGANIZE ITSELF. CURBING THE DRUG TRAFFIC
RECEIVED MAJOR EMPHASIS. PRESIDENT TURBAY NAMED A NUMBER
OF KEY ECONOMIC AND OTHER OFFICIALS, INCLUDING GOVERNORS OF
COLOMBIA'S TWENTY-TWO DEPARTMENTS, CONTINUING TO GIVE BOTH
CONSERVATIVE FACTIONS A FAIR SHARE. BRAZIL'S FREEZING TEMP-
ERATURES AROUSED COLOMBIAN HOPES OF HIGHER COFFEE PRICES,
BUT COFFEE FEDERATION LEADERS CONTINUED TO SHOW INTEREST IN
IN REACHING AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES ON A MECHANISM FOR
MAINTAINING MODERATE PRICE LEVELS. LATIN AMERICAN COFFEE
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PRODUCER COUNTRIES WILL MEET INBOGOTA NEXT WEEK. THE
NEW COMMUNICATION MINISTER PREDICTED COLOR TV BY JANUARY.
RURAL VIOLENCE BY MOSCOW-LINE GUERRILLA GROUPS IN
ISOLATED AREAS WAS HEAVY THIS WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. NEW ADMINISTRATION EMPHASIZES "LAW AND ORDER" AND
CONTINUES TO ORGANIZE ITSELF. "LAW AND ORDER IS INCREASINGLY

EMERGING AS A MAIN THEME OF THE TURBAY ADMINISTRATION. IN POLICY STATEMENTS MADE BY NEW MINISTERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS DURING THE PAST WEEK, THIS THEME ENJOYED A POSITION OF PROMINENCE. DURING ITS INTRODUCTORY VISIT TO THE CONGRESS, THE CABINET DELIVERED A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT TURBAY URGING THE TWO HOUSES TO ESTABLISH SUBCOMMITTEES IN EACH OF THEIR STANDING COMMITTEES TO STUDY PENDING LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS RELATIVE TO COLOMBIA'S "SECURITY" (I.E., CRIME AND PERSONAL SAFETY) PROBLEM AND TO WORK OUT SOLUTIONS IN COLLABORATION WITH THIS MINISTERS WITHIN THE NEXT FIFTEEN DAYS. COMBATTING THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC ALSO RECEIVED MAJOR ADMINISTRATION ATTENTION DURING THE WEEK (SEE ITEM 3). AMONG OTHER NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS ANNOUNCED BY MINISTERS ARE A GRADUAL INCREASE IN GASOLINE PRICES AND INTRODUCTION OF COLOR TELEVISION (SEE ITEM 6). LABOR IS UNHAPPY AT THE PROSPECT OF GASOLINE PRICE INCREASES--THE UTC HAS CALLED FOR COMPENSATORY MINIMUM WAGE INCREASES--BUT UTC AND CTC LEADERS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THEIR FIRST MEETING WITH THE NEW LABOR MINISTER, AT WHICH HE ANNOUNCED THE DONATION OF A BUILDING FOR A "LABOR UNIVERSITY." PRESIDENT TURBAY ALSO ANNOUNCED A LARGE NUMBER OF NEW APPOINTMENTS, INCLUDING VICE MINISTERS (SEE ITEM 4) AND THE GOVERNORS OF COLOMBIA'S TWENTY-TWO DEPARTMENTS. THIRTEEN OF THE TWENTY-TWO ARE LIBERALS AND NINE ARE CONSERVATIVES (FOUR ALVARISTAS, FOUR PASTRANISTAS AND ONE INDEPENDENT). THE GOVERNORS OF CUDINAMARCA (WHICH INCLUDES BOGOTA) AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ANTIOQUIA (MEDELLIN), PERHAPS THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT DEPARTMENTS, ARE BOTH CONSERVATIVES, ONE FROM EACH FACTION. TURBAY HAS THUS GIVEN FURTHER EVIDENCE OF HIS GENEROSITY TOWARD THE OPPOSITION AND OF HIS INTENT TO TREAT ITS TWO FACTIONS IN AN EVEN-HANDED MANNER. ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT, TURBAY ASKED AMBASSADOR BARCO TO CONTINUE AS AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES AND NAMED CARLOS BERNAL TELLES AS NEW AMBASSADOR TO THE OAS.

3. ATTORNEY GENERAL PRESENTS MARIJUANA REPORT AND REAFFIRMS PRESIDENT TURBAY'S DETERMINATION TO CURB DRUG TRAFFIC. ON AUGUST 12, ATTORNEY GENERAL SERRANO PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT TURBAY A REPORT ESTIMATING THE AREA UNDER MARIJUANA CULTIVATION IN AND NEAR GUAJIRA AT 70,000 HECTARES (BOGOTA 7469). SERRANO SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THE REPORT HAD SHOCKED TURBAY AND CONFIRMED THE LATTER'S DETERMINATION TO TAKE STRONG MEASURES TO HALT MARIJUANA TRAFFICKING. TURBAY'S INTENTION TO EFFECT A "WAR ON DRUGS" AND DETAILS FROM THE REPORT RECEIVED EXTENSIVE PRESS AND RADIO COVERAGE AS A RESULT OF AN INTERVIEW GIVEN BY SERRANO. EDITORIALS IN BOTH EL TIEMPO AND EL ESPECTADOR EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT, GIVEN THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM, CALLS

FOR AN INCREASED MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE GUAJIRA WERE
NOT WITHOUT MERIT.

4. TURBAY MAKES KEY ECONOMIC SECTOR APPOINTMENTS. DURING
THE PAST WEEK, THE TURBAY GOVERNMENT MADE SEVERAL IMPORTANT
APPOINTMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR. THE FOREIGN TRADE TEAM
WILL REMAIN IN PACE, AT LEAST UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR.
ANTONIO URDINOLA AT INCOMEX (FOREIGN TRADE INSTITUTE) AND
DR. RAFAEL GAMA AT PROEXPO (EXPORT PROMOTION FOUNDATION).
OTHER KEY APPOINTMENTS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED ARE AS FOLLOWS:
GUILLERMO NUNEZ VERGARA - VICE MINISTER OF FINANCE (EX-EMPLOYEE
OF THE BANKERS ASSOCIATION, RESPECTED ECONOMIST AND CLOSE
COLLABORATOR OF NEW DIRECTOR OF PLANNING);
JOSE FRANCISCO MORRIS - SUPERINTENDENT OF BANKING (33YEAR-OLD
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LABOR LAWYER);
GUILLERMO GAVIRIA ECHEVERRRI - DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION
(SENATOR FROM ANTIOQUIA, EXPERIENCED IN CIVIL AVIATION);
ALBERTO GALEANO RESTREPO - DIRECTOR OF SENA (GOC TRAINING
INSTITUTE); (EX-DIRECTOR OF INCOMES; EX-AMBASSADOR TO PANAMA); AND
JOSE FERNANDO ISAZA - DIRECTOR OF IFI (GOC FINANCIAL INVEST-
MENT INSTITUTE);(EX-CHIEF OF INFRASTRUCTURE DIVISION OF THE
NATIONAL PLANNING OFFICE; EX-ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR OF
NATIONAL TERRITORIES).

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5. FREEZING TEMPERATURES IN BRAZIL CHEER COLOMBIANS WITH HOPES OF HIGHER COFFEE PRICES. FREEZING TEMPERATURES IN BRAZIL MADE HEADLINE NEWS IN COLOMBIA. INFORMATION AVAILABLE LOCALLY ON DAMAGE IN BRAZIL REMAINS SPECULATIVE, BUT REPORTS ARE THAT IT WILL BE LIMITED TO PRODUCTION SUBSEQUENT TO FIRST FLOWERING. SHOULD THE SHORTFALL BE AS MUCH AS 3-4 MILLION BAGS, THE PRICE IMPACT WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL, A COLOMBIAN COFFEE GROWERS FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS. DESPITE THE CONTROLLED EUPHORIA OVER THE BARZILIAN PLIGHT, THE FEDERATION LEADERS EVIDENTLY REMAIN OPEN TO DIALOGUE WITH THE UNITED STATES IN SEARCH OF A MODERATE SOLUTION. THE NEW FINANCE MINISTER HAS ADOPTED A SIMILAR CAUTIOUS APPROACH IN PRESS STATEMENTS. LATIN AMERICAN COFFEE PRODUCERS WILL MEET ON AUGUST 22 IN BOGOTA
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TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION.

6. MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS SAYS "YES" TO COLOR TELEVISION. NEW MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS JOSE MANUEL ARIAS CARRIZOSA HAS MADE COLOR TELEVISION FOR COLOMBIA ONE OF HIS PRIORITIES. HE ENVISIONS COLOR TV BROADCASTS BEGINNING IN JANUARY 1979. FRENCH GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO CONVINCE GOC TO CHOOSE SECAM HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY STRONG AND, AS OF NOW, SEEM LIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL. HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY IS PLANNING A COLOR TV SEMINAR IN NOVEMBER (BOGOTA 7522 AND 7668) IN THE HOPE OF INCREASING U.S. PROSPECTS.

7. FARC KILLS CAMPESINO "INFORMERS". ON AUGUST 14, GUERRILLAS OF THE FOURTH FRONT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC) BURST INTO A FAMILY GATHERING IN THE CIMITARRA AREA OF SANTANDER AND KILLED TWELVE CAMPESINOS ACCUSED OF BEING INFORMERS. MEANWHILE, OTHER FARC DEPREDATIONS CONTINUED IN THE MAGDALENA VALLEY, WHERE, ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER REPORTS, FORTY-SIX CAMPESINOS HAVE BEEN KILLED AND SIX RANCHERS KIDNAPPED TO DATE IN 1978. DURING THE PAST WEEK, THE FARC ALSO REPORTEDLY KILLED TWO POLICE AGENTS IN EL PAUJIL, AN AREA OF THE INTENDANCY OF CAQUETA OVER WHICH THE FIRST AND SECOND FRONTS HAVE LONG ENJOYED A HIGH DEGREE OF CONTROL. EL TIEMPO, BOGOTA'S

LARGEST DAILY, RECENTLY CARRIED A LONG ARTICLE ON THE FARC
AND IT SMOST CELEBRATED LEADER, PEDRO ANTONIO MARIN, ALIAS
TIRO FIJO, WHICH CONTAINED NUMEROUS INACCURACIES. AMONG THE
ALLEGATIONS IN THE ARTICLE WERE TWO THAT, INsofar AS THE
EMBASSY IS AWARE, ARE UNSUPPORTED BY ANY EVIDENCE--THAT THE
SOVIET UNION IS SUPPORTING THE FARC FINANCIALLY AND THAT
THE FARC HAS BEEN TRADING MARIJUANA FOR WEAPONS. WE SUSPECT
THAT THE INACCURACIES MAY BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ARMY'S
ANTI-GUERRILLA PROPOGANDA CAMPAIGN.

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